



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF NAVAL RECORDS

2 NAVY ANNEX

WASHINGTON DC 20370-5100

TRG

Docket No: 5787-99

15 March 2000

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

This is in reference to your application for correction of your naval record pursuant to the provisions of title 10 of the United States Code section 1552.

A three-member panel of the Board for Correction of Naval Records, sitting in executive session, considered your application on 15 March 2000. Your allegations of error and injustice were reviewed in accordance with administrative regulations and procedures applicable to the proceedings of this Board. Documentary material considered by the Board consisted of your application, together with all material submitted in support thereof, your naval record and applicable statutes, regulations and policies.

After careful and conscientious consideration of the entire record, the Board found that the evidence submitted was insufficient to establish the existence of probable material error or injustice.

The Board found that you reenlisted in the Marine Corps in the grade of SSGT (E-6) on 19 April 1969. At that time, you had completed about eight years of service on two prior enlistments.

The record shows that on 15 June 1969 you began a period of unauthorized absence which lasted until 16 January 1975 when you surrendered at the Marine Corps Clemency Processing Unit. Your military record shows that you submitted a written request for an undesirable discharge in order to avoid trial by court-martial for this five year period of unauthorized absence. Your record also shows that prior to submitting this request you conferred with a qualified military lawyer at which time you were advised of your rights and warned of the probable adverse consequences of accepting such a discharge. The Board found that your request was granted and, as a result of this action, you were spared the stigma of a court-martial conviction and the potential penalties of a punitive discharge and confinement at hard labor. You were discharged on 17 January 1975. Subsequently you were issued a clemency discharge.

In its review of your application the Board carefully weighed all

potentially mitigating factors, such as your prior honorable service and service in Vietnam. The Board also considered your contention, in effect, that your misconduct should be excused because you became mentally ill after you were denied leave to take care of your terminally ill mother. The Board found that these factors were not sufficient to warrant recharacterization of your discharge given your record of misconduct and especially your request for discharge to avoid trial for an unauthorized absence of over five years. There is no evidence in the record, and you have submitted none, to show that you were not responsible for your actions while you were in the Marine Corps.

The Board believed that considerable clemency was extended to you when your request for discharge to avoid trial by court-martial was approved since, by this action, you escaped the possibility of confinement at hard labor and a punitive discharge. Further, the Board concluded that you received the benefit of your bargain when your request for discharge was granted and you should not be permitted to change it now. The Board concluded that your discharge was proper as issued and no change is warranted.

Accordingly, your application has been denied. The names and votes of the members of the panel will be furnished upon request.

It is regretted that the circumstances of your case are such that favorable action cannot be taken. You are entitled to have the Board reconsider its decision upon submission of new and material evidence or other matter not previously considered by the Board. In this regard, it is important to keep in mind that a presumption of regularity attaches to all official records. Consequently, when applying for a correction of an official naval record, the burden is on the applicant to demonstrate the existence of probable material error or injustice.

Sincerely,

W. DEAN PFEIFFER
Executive Director